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FACTS IN RAMAYANA

SWAMI BALANANDA



Perantapalli

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by

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SWAMY BALANANDA

(Photo taken in 1937)

FOREWORD

From times immemorial, India is known as the sacred land (*Punyabhoomi*), the land of ancient wisdom, with holy hills and celestial rivers. Our country has produced several sages, seers and saints and many a great man all these ages. One such great saint who lives in the Papi Hills on the banks of the River Godavari is Swamy Balananda, who is popularly known as Perantapalli Swamy to his devotees and admirers all over the country.

When he was in his teens, Swamy was much influenced by the great sayings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and fascinated by Vivekananda's thrilling gospel of work and service. Swamy Balananda was totally transformed by the powerful messages of the dynamic saint, Swami Vivekananda, who for the first time in the annals of history, gave the world the most dynamic practical philosophy of Action. Like a true disciple of the Vedic age, our Swamy devoted himself with a loving heart, to the service of humanity and all these years he has been working round the clock to improve the lot of the hill tribes. He founded the institution 'Poverty Relief Service' for the uplift of these people. By his grace there was adequate response from the hill tribes and most spontaneous and voluntary co-operation from the general public and the Government as well, in giving a shape to his dreams of reconstruction. He acquired Ac. 100-00 of land and distributed the same among the landless poor for a nominal rent of one anna per acre. He was responsible for the eradication of the fell disease 'Yaws' which was ravaging those much neglected areas. These hill tribes, children were also encouraged to get educated in various schools at Rajahmundry, and a hostel was maintained for them. It was a Herculean task to reform these urchins who were almost

naked. Swamiji thus laboured hard for more than half a century and today we find several of the hill tribes people walking, talking and living like anyone of us. Some of them are well educated and well placed in life.

Swamy Balananda is a true saint, who combined in himself profound spirituality with intellectual powers of a very high order. All the humanitarian work done in the Papi Hill area is an episode in his spiritual development. The Presiding Deity of his Ashram, Lord Viswanath (Lord of the Universe) and his Temple Dome with the Cross and the Crescent, the Swastick and Fire, facing the four quarters of the globe and 'Om' pointing heavenwards beckon all communities, without distinction of caste, colour or creed to foregather and offer prayers to the Almighty, the Universal Spirit.

All that can be said of Swamy Balananda is that in his personality are harmoniously combined—knowledge, devotion and spirit of service. In anything he does he is one with Life, Light and Love (the quintessence of Bhagavad Gita). He is a living example and inspiration to those who come in contact with him. His books "Message to Humanity" and "Spiritual Enquiry" are inspiring based as they are on universal principles, and reveal to the common man the path to spiritual awakening and upward progress.

Swamiji's analysis of the events in Ramayana reveal his intuition and his clear insight into the history of that period. It is gratifying that this book is coming out on the eve of the All-India Ramayana Conference which is proposed to be held shortly at Trivandrum. Our thanks are due to the Razan Electric Press for their speedy and neat execution of the work.

Kakinada }
18-11-1972 }

BALANANDA BHAKTA BRUNDAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of bringing out the facts found in the great Ramayana as they appear in the succeeding pages is to enable the readers not only to become aware of the prevalence of misunderstandings and wrong impressions regarding several events found therein, but also with the view to enable rectification and elimination of such misunderstandings and wrong impressions.

The most important of all events, in Ramayana, relate to the forest life of Sree Ramachandra, Mother Seetha and Sree Lakshmana, including those dramatic events which culminate ultimately in Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana's banishment to the forest, and also what transpires between Seetha and Lakshmana while Rama was away, deep in the forest, and searching for the elusive Asura, Mareecha, who has taken the beguiling form of a beautiful deer with a nefarious motive. As is generally understood by the readers and devotees, the entire blame for Rama's banishment rests on King Dasaratha; and some attribute it to Manthara. There is, again, the general belief that very harsh, and almost abusive, words were exchanged between Mother Seetha and Lakshmana in the forest. These are some among the events taken up to point out the wrong impressions commonly held by all, and to clear them.

As we can now see, the generality among mankind is incapable of perceiving facts, as they are, abiding in the scriptures. This incapability prevails in mankind the world over. It may then be asked, "What are, then, the causes for such non-perception of facts and the inevitable confusions that issue therefrom?" The causes are many. So, let us mention briefly the most salient ones, with particular reference to the scripture before us--the great Ramayana.

The advent and life of Sree Ramachandra relates to a period dating back to hundreds of centuries when the means of communication were not as they are today. Hence the only means of communicating thoughts and ideas between one individual and another was through mouth, through words; he,

again, in turn, communicating what he had thus heard and learned to a third,—ensuring thus an endless succession of media for transmission. Such transmission, in course of the passage of time, was carried on, aided by memory, as there was then no means to record them in characters, that is, in writing. As a consequence of depending upon memory for transmission of events that took place innumerable centuries earlier, by mouth as the sole means of communication, many facts were lost—memory being what it is, in general,—and many additions got incorporated by the time characterisation for words came into existence and efforts undertaken to record facts, as far as possible, in writing. Even before the scripture came into existence in writing, it suffered from these defects. Later, while most of the facts were recorded faithfully, those others that were lost could not find place in the scripture. This left lacunae which gave scope for ambiguous events to be brought in.

As a consequence of these developments, the scripture became an amalgam of facts and incomplete facts, the latter representing all the defects mentioned above, providing ample scope for misinterpretations and confusions. Let us go farther and see how a scripture comes into existence.

An individual “feels” something; “experiences” the feelings, “discriminates” over the experience; arrives at “conclusion;” the conclusion settles in the individual in the form of “silence”. Silence, in its turn, takes the form of “sound” or “speech”. The ultimate shape of sound or speech is “characters”, or, “writing”. This is the process by which all scriptures have originally come into existence.

The individual, by reading a scripture, is to penetrate through all the above-stated transformation of the feelings of the author. Then, and then alone, he can perceive the facts abiding in the scripture, and the intention and purpose of the author in writing it. We put it in another way. The scripture stands as a bridge between the reader and the author, or, of whom the scripture speaks, for the reader to move up to that intention and purpose. Further, words have more than one meaning and, according to the context, there would be further variations in the

meanings. On account of all these inescapable situations, scholarliness alone cannot enable the reader to arrive at the intention and purpose of the author, or, of whom the scripture speaks; not only that, even an illiterate individual, and also an individual born blind, can perceive that intention and purpose by merely holding the book, only for a few seconds, once in a day, with perfect confidence in them. It is worth while to recollect that some of the authors of great scriptures were unlettered, and, one or two were born blind.

Thus, in the absence of confidence either in the author, or, of whom the scripture speaks, it is impossible, for the readers in general, to perceive facts abiding in the scriptures. This confidence is generated by Grace. Grace is independent of one's qualifications, scholarliness and austerities. Its Source generates it in the individuals who have the qualitative conduciveness for its manifestation. This gives awareness in the reader that Source of Grace is present in everyone, everywhere, equally and always. As it is, the readers in general, throughout the world, are inconducive for Grace to abide in and manifest through them.

It is in order to eliminate this general inconduciveness in the readers of scriptures, and to enable development of proper conduciveness in them, that the following facts from Ramayana have been culled out of the innumerable facts found therein, and presented in an easily comprehensible language setting at rest their confusions and wrong notions regarding the points discussed in these pages.

FACTS IN RAMAYANA

PART I

The great king Dasaratha, Mother Seetha Devi, Sree Lakshmana and even Sri Ramachandra are being criticised even by the Hindus, let alone the others. The following are the points on which the criticisms are based. (1) The king sent Ramachandra to the forest; for which, there was no justification. (2) Ramachandra obeyed the king's (father's) unjust orders. (3) Mother Seetha Devi spoke of Lakshmana as one with wrong motives, and Lakshmana retaliated harshly. Let us take up, one by one, these points in detail and find out the facts relating to all these.

It is said in the scriptures, "The king had given two boons to the queen Mother Kaikeyi, with the stipulation, that they may be claimed at any moment, and, according to the Mother's choice. The Mother claimed those boons just on the previous night of the day on which Ramachandra was expected to be anointed as king. One of the choices of the queen was to send Ramachandra to the forest the next morning to live there for fourteen years and the other was to anoint Bharatha as king with the same articles which were brought and kept ready for anointing Ramachandra. At this, the king repeatedly requested, begged and prayed the queen to change the choices. The queen became inexorable and ignored the king."

Let us consider how the decision was arrived at by the king, for anointing Ramachandra. In the presence of great sages headed by Vasista Mahamuni. Ministers and the citizens of Ayodhya, the king announced his decision to anoint Ramachandra, and sought their approval. All the citizens loudly proclaimed their hearty approval of the decision. Whereon, the king wanted to know from the citizens *as to why* they gave their unanimous approval for his decision. The king asked the citizens, "Is it because *it was my decision to anoint Ramachandra?*" The citizens said "No! No! We all want Ramachandra to be our king. Rama is *the fittest to be our king.*" At this,

the king became an ocean of joy. Why did the king want to make this decision as one made by the citizens themselves?— This point will be taken up later on.

At once, Ramachandra was informed about it. After proclaiming the decision to anoint Ramachandra as king, without fixing a date for it, the king went to his apartment. In a short time, the king sent word to Ramachandra to appear before him. Ramachandra was surprised at this unexpected and sudden message. Rama thought, "the king must have met with some difficulty in crowning me. Whatever happens is for the best." In this attitude, Ramachandra appeared before the king; and the following conversation took place between father and son. "Rama! my son, I know Bharatha loves you more than himself. *Still bad influences are very powerful.* I had certain bad omens. Therefore, I want to perform your coronation tomorrow itself. Prepare yourself for the same". Ramachandra went back. The king requested Vasista Mahamuni to instruct Rama as to how he is to prepare for the occasion. The minister was asked to collect and get ready all the required articles for the great ceremony in time, that is, before dawn. Meanwhile, queen Kaikeyi came to know of the king's decision. The queen became angry and waverous. At that stage, Manthara, the servant maid of the queen, intervened and said, "you have insulted Mother Kousalya before, on several occasions. Now, when Rama is crowned king, the turn will be of Kousalya's. You will have to be a slave to Kousalya in the palace. Think well and decide properly". The facts regarding these points "still bad influences are very powerful" and "in time, that is before dawn,"— will be discussed later.

After all these, the king went to queen Kaikeyi's apartment. The queen was angry for the decision of the king to crown Ramachandra. The queen took promise from the king to the effect that the two boons given to the queen—but till then unclaimed—can now be claimed, and redeemed by the king. Thereafter, first, the queen wanted to send Rama to the forest to live there for fourteen years, and, secondly, to crown Bharatha

with the articles which were collected and kept ready to crown Rama. At this, he got perplexed, fell down and became unconscious. After some time, the king recovered and requested the queen to ask for anything, or even everything, other than these two. Again, the king said, "I hereby give you the kingdom. It is yours now. You better give the same to Rama by yourself, so that you will have that glory and I too may survive." The king hoped that the queen would become reasonable and accept this offer.

After dawn, when the minister appeared, the queen told him that the king had no sleep the previous night. The queen—but not the king—sent word through the minister to bring Rama to the presence of the king. "Rama appeared as ordered by the queen—not by the king; saw father lying unconscious; touched those sacred feet; and understood the situation. Then the queen began talking, "Rama! the great king is in worry. He is unable to talk. You alone can save him from the predicament. Promise me that you will save him." Rama said, "I swear before you that I am prepared to do anything for my father's sake. Mother! tell me what he wants". After this promise the queen Mother began to talk about what the king wanted. 'O virtuous Rama! once upon a time, in a particular situation, I saved the great king, your father. Pleased by that action of mine, the king gave me two boons. The choice of the boons and of the time when they are to be claimed, was left to me. Now, I have claimed the boons. Accordingly, you must go to the forest and live there for fourteen years. And, Bharatha must be crowned with the articles kept ready to crown you. I am sure, you will save the king by enabling him to fulfil his promise to me, by yourself leaving to the forest to-day itself." It must be noted that Ramachandra was told of all these, by the queen but not by the king. The king was lying unconscious almost all the while. He was occasionally regaining partial consciousness, feebly uttering "Rama!", but unable even to open eyelids. Rama said, "Well, Mother! I will redeem my father's promise." Here it is to be noted that the word was "Promise" but not "order".

Ramachandra was preparing to proceed to the forest. Mother Seetha Devi decided to follow. The great Lakshmana's

anger grew to a high pitch. At that stage, Lakshmana said, "Brother, I cannot tolerate such injustice. I will destroy the whole army of the king and Bharatha, and restore the kingdom to you. Give me permission." Ramachandra pacified Lakshmana. Lakshmana too decided to follow the brother. All the three left Ayodhya to the forest to live there for fourteen years.

A few days later, the king died. Vasista Mahamuni gave instructions to the ministers to preserve the dead body safe: and gave further instructions to send messengers to Bharatha who was then staying with his maternal grandfather.

The messengers were given strict instructions not to reveal the happenings in the palace of Ayodhya, to Bharatha. They were to tell Bharatha to come without delay as wanted by the Guru, Vasista Mahamuni. It was a long journey. But, they reached the palace where Bharatha was, within the shortest time. It was another kingdom. The king Kekaya, Bharatha's grand-father, conveyed the Guru's message to Bharatha. Bharatha left his grand father's palace immediately for Ayodhya. On the way he asked several questions. "Why was I wanted so urgently? What is the matter in Ayodhya? I had some bad omens. Did any calamity overtake Ayodhya? In case there is any, was my Mother Kaikeyi the cause for it? How is my brother Rama? How is my father?" Several similar questions Bharatha had put to the messengers on the way to Ayodhya.

At the end of the journey, Bharatha and party entered the city, Ayodhya. Bharatha began to question again, "Why are the citizens not cheerful. I do not see the usual activities in the city. I expected to see the decorations in the city connected with my brother Rama's coronation. But I see nothing of the sort. Tell me what are all these?" Bharatha's anxiety grew to a very high pitch, just as Lakshmana's anger while leaving Ayodhya to the forest.

Bharatha entered the palace. He got perplexed to see the calamitous and pathetic atmosphere in the palace. He was in the process of gathering all information about the situation. Just then his mother, queen Kaikeyi, approached and embraced

him with the words "Dear son! I have procured every thing, the whole kingdom, for you". By this one sentence, Bharatha grasped the situation well. He left his mother and went to his other mothers—the queens Kousalya and Sumitra.

Without delay, the funeral ceremony of the great king Dasaratha was performed. As instructed by Vasista Mahamuni, the elders, chiefs and citizens of Ayodhya assembled in the palace. Word was sent for Bharatha to come. Bharatha arrived. The Mahamuni called Bharatha and said, "Bharatha! your father, the king, gave you the kingdom. Accept the throne without further delay. All articles required for your coronation are ready, and, all are waiting to perform it. The kingdom without a king cannot keep its peace". Whereon Bharatha said, "O great Muni, I cannot understand as to how the kingdom can remain peaceful, by crowning me as king?—Me, who is considered by each and every one in the kingdom as one, at whose connivance my Mother plotted against my great spotless brother Rama, and brought about such undescribable calamity to the whole kingdom—Me, who is despised by one and all in the kingdom. When such an I sit on the throne, can you expect peace in the kingdom? None in the whole world, except my spotless brother Rama, believes me as innocent. Such being the situation, how do you propose to crown me? My wish is that I must, at this very moment, proceed to the forest, crown Rama there itself and bring Rama back to Ayodhya. This I have decided." On hearing this decision of Bharatha, the sages, ministers, elders, citizens and all became overjoyous. Suspicion of all in the assembly, regarding Bharatha, disappeared. Almost the whole Ayodhya including the queen Mothers, decided to follow Bharatha to the forest to bring back Rama to the kingdom. The citizens, sages headed by Vasista Mahamuni, ministers and queen Mothers followed Bharatha to the forest to bring Ramachandra back to Ayodhya. They took all the articles collected and kept ready—along with them, with the intention of crowning Ramachandra in the forest itself and then bringing him back to Ayodhya. Hoping for the possibility of such an occasion, they took an army with all its limbs—a complete army—along with them.

In the meantime, soon after Ramachandra's leaving for the forest, to stay there for fourteen years, along with Mother Seetha Devi and brother Lakshmana, the great sage-king Janaka of Mithila came to know of all that happened in Ayodhya. He sent spies to Ayodhya to find out Bharatha's attitude in the situation. After Bharatha's leaving for the forest to crown Rama and bring him back to Ayodhya, the spies went back to the kingdom of Janaka and reported to the king, all that happened in Ayodhya. They said, "O King! Bharatha's nobility is incomparable. His affection for his elder brother Rama is unimaginable. He declined to be crowned as king of Ayodhya and went to the forest to bring back Ramachandra. He went with a complete army to the forest. This is the one thing,—the necessity for such an army in the forest—which we fail to comprehend."

On getting the report from the spies, the king Janaka also started to the forest, in the same direction as that of Bharatha, with a complete army, to meet with a possible emergency. Near to Chitrakuta, where Ramachandra, Mother Seetha Devi and Lakshmana were put up, both the parties—one from Ayodhya and the other from Mithila—met. Both together went to Rama's Hermitage. All met Seetha, Rama and Lakshmana. Father's obsequies were performed. The next day Vasista Mahamuni got assembled the sages, Janaka, Bharatha, the elders and the citizens of both Ayodhya and Mithila that followed them. It was at their camp away from the Hermitage of Ramachandra. In that assembly, the Mahamuni called Bharatha and said the following, "Bharatha! I have a proposal to make. When followed, it will enable us to extricate ourselves from the prevailing predicament. It is this. You should stay in the forest for fourteen years in place of Rama; and, Rama should come back to Ayodhya." This was the first occasion, from the moment of his getting the message from the Muni at his grand-father's palace in the kingdom of Kekaya, when Bharatha was found cheerful. The proposal of the Muni was so pleasing, cheery, jovial and inspirative to him, that he at once began to prepare for it. At that moment, all those that assembled there felt Bharatha as the embodiment of Sincereness saturated-Affection

for Rama. That feeling in them began to grow—and grow from moment to moment. The entire assembly began to praise Bharatha. They all took Bharatha as Ramachandra himself. The facts relating to this incident will be taken up later on.

Finally, all efforts to bring Ramachandra back failed. Thereafter Ramachandra requested his father-in-law, the sage, king Janaka, to go to Ayodhya along with Bharatha and party and to look into the affairs of Treasury, Army, Administration etc., and then to return to his kingdom, Mithila. Bharatha returned to Ayodhya with the sacred wooden-sandals of Ramachandra, placed the same on the throne and retired. After all these, Ramachandra left Chitrakoota to Parnasala and put up there.

While they were at Parnasala, Mother Seetha saw a deer of unusual beauty and wanted it. While proceeding to capture the deer, Ramachandra told Lakshmana to take all precaution to protect Seetha and not to leave this place “till I return”. The chase for the deer led Ramachandra to some distance from the Hermitage. It could not be caught alive. So Rama shot it with an arrow. The deer fell down. It loudly uttered “Seetha!”, “Lakshmana!”, and died. Mother Seetha and Lakshmana heard those utterances. Lakshmana understood the situation rightly, but Seetha Devi mistook the situation. Lakshmana understood it to be a sort of mischief of Rakshasas. Mother took it to be as some harm to Ramachandra. Mother Seetha wanted Lakshmana to go at once to the rescue of Rama. Lakshmana told Seetha about the facts related to those utterances, and further said that there was no need for him to go, and that no harm will, or can, befall Rama. Seetha repeatedly wanted Lakshmana to go and rescue Rama. Still, Lakshmana refused to leave the place and repeated his stand; and, further, said that Rama asked him not to leave the place till his return. At that stage, Seetha said “you, Lakshmana! are following us with some bad motive” and uttered very harsh words, and, further said, “In case you do not go to the rescue of Rama, I will jump into fire and end my life” Whereon, Lakshmana said, “well, I will leave this place but, I think, when we return

back, we may not see you here again", and left the place to where Rama was.

Just then, Rama was returning after shooting the deer. Both the brothers met. Rama asked Lakshmana as to why he left Seetha and came in search of him. Lakshmana narrated all that happened between him and Seetha. Both reached Parnasala. But, Seetha was not found there. In the absence of the brothers at the Hermitage, the cruel rakshasa, Ravana, carried away Seetha Devi to Lanka, his kingdom. Ramachandra realised the situation, became angry, sorry, confused, and began to search and lament. In that situation, Lakshmana told Rama, "Do not worry; for, Seetha is, occasionally, in the habit of playing hide and seek. Now also, I think Seetha must be hiding under some bush. Come on brother, let us search those places where Seetha used to play." In this particular point is inherent the most important facts relating to the Parnasala incident.

Upto now, we have brought out seventeen important points, out of several, in the four—"Ayodhya", "Mithila", "Chitrakoota" and "Parnasala"—events in the history of Ramachandra. Of the 17, 12 relate to Ayodhya, two to Mithila, two to Chitrakoota and one to Parnasala—in the scripture. Therefore, now, let us take up one after another, of all the points, discuss them thoroughly and find out the facts abiding in those events.

PART II

I. In the Palace of Ayodhya

Why did the great king Dasaratha want to make his decision to crown Rama — which was immediately and unanimously approved by all the citizens, chiefs, ministers, elders and sages—appear as one made by them only? Where was the need for the king to make the decision as such? No palpable need for it, is found in the scripture. Still it is found as having happened. So, there must have been some subtle need for it. What was that need?

There ought to have been a sort of dispute, or intrigue for the crown. That must have been an affair known to all in general. That must also have been one which was prevalent in the kingdom of Ayodhya from some time. Therefore, the king wanted to know whether there was any support in the kingdom, for the rival to the crown. Hence the king asked the assembly "Why did you all unanimously support the decision? Is it because I have decided?" "No, no, we want Rama to be our king, for, Rama is the fittest to rule the kingdom", said the assemblage in one voice. Here, you must mark a particular point, that is, "*Rama is the fittest to rule the kingdom.*" In the normal course, such an assembly would have declared, "*Rama is the eldest son of the king, hence we want Rama to rule the kingdom.*" Not only the assembly did not declare so, but the assembly did not, at least, add in the declaration that Rama being the eldest son of the king, he must rule the kingdom. The assembly did not give any value to the elderliness of Rama. Why did the assembly ignore that right the elderliness, of Rama? So, there must be some subtle reason for it. What was that? It is said in the history that the king Dasaratha, in his early days, had only two queens Kousalya and Sumitra, After a long time, having no issues, he decided to marry again and asked the king Kekaya to give his daughter, princess Kaikeyi, to him (king Dasaratha). The king Kekaya proposed a condition to king Dasaratha to the effect that the son born to his daughter must be crowned king of Ayodhya. King Dasaratha promised to do so. This fact also was known to all. On this ground, queen Kaikeyi must have been requesting the king to crown Bharatha—from some time. This fact also must have been known in the Kingdom generally. **That was why the assemblage did not demand to crown Rama on the ground of his elderliness.** Also, that must have been the reason for the king's attempt to make his decision of crowning Rama, as one made by the citizens, chiefs, elders and sages themselves. Further, queen Kaikeyi must have been inducing Bharatha also to demand the kingdom for himself, as a right, on the ground of the promise made by his father to his grand-father king Kekaya. But, Bharatha was not for it, even one percent. For Bharatha, there was nothing greater than his service to his

elder brother Rama. So, he adamantly stood on his resolve—which was to serve Rama. When his mother's insistence to claim his right, became unbearable to him, he must have decided to leave Ayodhya for a short while and stay in the kingdom of his grand-father. He must have expressed his view to his father. Father and son together, without the knowledge of any others, except Vasistha Mahamuni, must have decided to crown Rama in his (Bharatha's) absence. After coming to this decision, Bharatha went to his grand-father and put up there. Coronation is the most important occasion in any kingdom. Yet, such an occasion was decided to be performed in the absence of Bharatha. Not only that, even the closest relation of king Dasaratha—the King Janaka—was not expected to be present for the coronation. All these go to show that the above stated details, relating to this affair, are the facts. It must be noted that, in the assembly, only the decision to crown Rama was arrived at, and declaration was made to that effect; **but no date was fixed for coronation.**

2. In the King's Apartment.

After closing the assembly, the king returned and sent word to Rama to come. Rama appeared before the king. The king said the following, "My beloved son, Rama! I know Bharatha loves and treats you as himself. Still bad influences are very powerful. I had certain bad omens. **Therefore I want to perform your coronation tomorrow itself.** Prepare yourself for the same."

"Bharatha loves and treats you as himself. Still bad influences are very powerful. Therefore... ..", said the king. What were those bad influences? They were Bharatha's Mother queen Kaikeyi; Mother's inducements to Bharatha and insistence on him to claim his right for the kingdom. It indicates that the rivalry to the throne was not a secret but an open—and also not sudden, but a long standing—one. **This second incident confirms the facts about the first incident.**

3. Soon after telling Rama to prepare himself to be crowned 'tomorrow itself' the king ordered the minister to keep in readi-

ness all the required articles for the occasion **before tomorrow dawn** and requested Vasistha Maha Muni to instruct Rama as to how he is to prepare himself for the coronation. The Mahamuni carried out the request of the king. The Minister carried out the order of the king, in time. See here, is it possible to keep in readiness all the required articles for such an occasion as coronation, within one night? No, it is not possible. But it was done by the minister. How could it be? Because, the articles were already collected and preserved. Hence the minister could keep them in readiness within one night. This makes it clear that the decision to crown Rama was arrived at beforehand, by the king, the Muni and Bharatha together, and the subject was placed before the assembly, in that manner, only to discover whether there was any support for the rival's (the queen Kaikeyi's) claim to the throne. **This is in conformity with the facts detailed before.**

4. In the Apartment of Queen Kaikeyi.

When the queen became angry and waverous on knowing the king's decision "to crown Rama tomorrow itself," Manthara, a distant relation and servant maid of the queen intervened and said, "you have insulted queen Kousalya on several occasions. Now when Rama is crowned king, the turn will be of Kousalya's. **You will have to be a slave to Kousalya in the palace. Think well and decide properly.**"

"You have insulted Kousalya on several occasions" said Manthara. This statement of Manthara indicates the fact that all was not well in the palace. The statement "on several occasions" shows the prevalence of long-standing and serious rivalry in the palace. The king was highly favourable to queen Kaikeyi—more than to the other queens—according to the history. Then where was the ground for any rivalry! Yet it was there. It cannot be due to quarrels and disputes over small affairs or things. For, quarrels and disputes arising over small things and affairs cannot lead to the extent of insulting the eldest Queen Mother of the palace by the youngest queen, that too, on several occasions. Hence the rivalry must have been over some very serious and highly important objective. **What was that**

objective? All the events clearly indicate that it must have been over the throne of Ayodhya concerning the right of Bharatha to the throne, based on the king's (his father's) promise to king Kekaya, father of queen Kaikeyi.

5. Queen Kaikeyi's message to father, King Kekaya.

"In case my son Bharatha is not crowned as king of Ayodhya, you, my father, will not see me alive but my dead body," was the message of Kaikeyi, through Manthara, to her father, king Kekaya.

See, what a destructive message it was. At the time of sending the message, Bharatha was staying with his uncle. The chain of events that drew forth such a message from the queen and the events that followed the message most clearly bring to light, the following facts, that is, this was not the first message on that subject. This must have been the last of the series of messages sent by the queen to father in this connection, inducing him also to demand, persistently, of the king of Ayodhya to redeem his promise, "a condition on which I (Kaikeyi) was given in marriage to him—to crown my son Bharatha as king of Ayodhya". But there might not have been a single favourable response from king Kekaya. Whatever may be the reasons for king Kekaya's non-interference in the dispute, one thing is sure, that is, Bharatha's nobleness and resoluteness must have contributed immensely to that attitude of his grand-father. This is enough to know that the situation was not a sudden flare up, but a long-standing rivalry of a most serious kind.

6. The Dark Dawn :

At the dawn on which Rama was expected to be crowned, queen Kaikeyi ordered the minister to bring Rama. The minister obeyed the order. Rama was brought as ordered by the queen. The king was lying unconscious. Then the queen began talking. "The great king is in worry. He is unable to talk. You alone can save him from the predicament. Promise me that you will save him." Rama said, "I swear before you that I am prepared to do any thing for my father's sake.

Mother, tell me what he wanted.” “O Virtuous Rama! once upon a time, in a particular situation, I saved the great king, your father. Pleased by that action of mine, the king gave me two boons. The choice of the boons and of the time when they are to be claimed, was left to me. Now, I have claimed them. Accordingly, you must go to the forest and live there for fourteen years. And, Bharatha must be crowned with the a ticles kept ready to crown you. I am sure, you will save the king by enabling him to fulfil his promise to me, by yourself leaving to the forest today itself.” IT MUST BE NOTED THAT ALL THESE WERE SPOKEN TO RAMA BY THE QUEEN, BUT NOT BY THE KING. “The king’s promise to me,” said the queen. This makes it clear, THAT THE KING DID NOT ORDER RAMA TO GO TO FOREST, OR, BHARATHA TO BE CROWNED. IT WAS THE QUEEN WHO ORDERED RAMA TO GO TO FOREST. EARLIER ALSO, IT WAS THE QUEEN WHO ORDERED THE MINISTER TO BRING RAMA.

Here is a most important point to be considered. How could the minister obey the queen’s orders—that too of the junior queen, so suddenly, and also, when the king was alive? This was very uncommon and also very improbable. Yet it had happened. Hence, there must have been some mighty ground for it. What was that ground?

The king in his agony, with the hope that the queen may come to reason, said “HEREBY I GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM. IT IS YOURS NOW. You better give the same to Rama, by yourself. So that, you will have that glory, and, I too may survive”.

From that moment, the queen stood on those words of the king, THAT IS, THE STAND THAT “I AM THE OWNER OF THE KINGDOM.” This position, first of all, the queen must have told the minister on that dark dawn. Or else, how could the palace minister of Ayodhya, at that time—in the rush of the waiting crowd headed by Vasista Mahamuni with all the articles for coronation—without consulting or, at least, informing the Muni, take Ramachandra, whom they were expecting to see coming under the royal (white) umbrella, like an ordinary person, unless the minister was given to understand that all powers belong to the queen Kaikeyi since the kingdom belongs to the

queen. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE GROUND FOR THE MINISTER'S OBEDIENCE TO THE QUEEN FROM THAT MOMENT. Rama was surprised. While approaching the king, Rama thought about the sudden message and began to think in the following manner—"Perhaps the king must have met with some difficulties in the way of crowning me. Well, it is all the same for me—kingdom or no kingdom. Whatever happens must be for good."

The events after this, till Rama's departure to forest, are all in conformity with the above-stated facts. In brief, the queen ordered Rama to go to forest on the authority of the queen's ownership of the kingdom. The king was absolutely innocent of the episode. And, also, the king was speechless, unconscious and powerless throughout the episode.

7. "I will redeem my father's PROMISE" said Rama to queen Kaikeyi. It must be noted that Rama's word was "PROMISE" and not "ORDER," that is, "my father's promise to you (the queen)", for the "order" to Rama was from the queen. It was the queen who ordered Rama to go and live in forest for fourteen years. Rama's last utterance confirms the above-stated facts. RAMA SAID, "WHY DID NOT THE KING TELL ME ALL THESE"? The words were "did not" but not "do not", that means, "why did not the king—earlier—order me to go and live in forest"?

8. In Queen Kousalya's Apartment :

Thereafter, Rama left Kaikeyi's apartment and went to take leave of Mother Kousalya. The senior-most queen Kousalya, blessed the son, Rama, to fulfil the mission. At that stage, Lakshmana intervened and said, "Brother, I cannot tolerate this situation. I will destroy the whole army including Bharatha, and, restore the kingdom to you. Permit me to accomplish it". But, Rama prevented Lakshmana from taking to such a course. Here, BHARATHA WAS THE MAIN TARGET OF DESTRUCTION AIMED AT BY LAKSHMANA. Why was it so? What prompted Lakshmana to declare that he would destroy Bharatha, his brother? Lakshmana must have been prompted by the fact that Bharatha was the rival claimant for the throne. It also further indicates that rivalry was not a sudden flare-up, but a long-standing and open one. These

happenings also stand to confirm the facts discussed earlier. Here was a very strange situation. Throughout the interval between Kaikeyi's order to the palace minister to bring Rama, and Rama's departure to forest, the minister did not discuss the situation with any of the elders, citizens and chiefs, not even with the great Muni, who was most prominent in the palace, though, all the while, they were all standing at the palace ground. Even Vasista Mahamuni—by whose one word the king sent Rama and Lakshmana to forest, when they were too young, under the protection of the Maha Muni Viswamitra, to oppose the highly mischievous and powerful Rakshasas,—was not consulted by the minister, although the minister was going and coming through the rushing crowd headed by the very Muni. It is inconceivable, yet happened. What made the minister to ignore everything and every one else than the ORDER OF QUEEN KAIKEYI? It was because of his knowledge that the queen's was the kingdom. Further, the minister knew that such a situation was expected by all even beforehand, because, the intrigue was a long-standing and open one; and no change could be brought about in the situation even by the intervention of the Muni himself. Therefore, he did not consult even the Muni. Hence he carried out the queen's orders. ALL THESE MAKE CERTAIN THE INNOCENCE OF THE KING IN THE EPISODE. At last, all the three—Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana—went to the forest.

9. Bharatha's Journey back to Ayodhya from his Uncle's Kingdom :—

One of the questions put by Bharatha—while coming back to Ayodhya from his grand father, Kekaya—to the messengers who went to bring him as directed by the Maha Muni was, "Was there any calamity in Ayodhya? IN CASE THERE IS ANY, WAS MY MOTHER THE CAUSE FOR IT"? Ah! what a plain question it was! This one question of Bharatha stands as a pointer to strengthen and confirm all the facts related to this affair, which are mentioned hitherto and the rest which will be mentioned hereafter. Here, you must note another point. That is, it was the Maha Muni who gave directions to messengers to bring

Bharatha—but not the minister. From that dark dawn till Ramachandra left Ayodhya to forest, the Muni did not intervene in the affairs; and, the minister too did not consult the Muni. There must have been a very worthy and subtle reason for it. What must have been that reason for the Muni's silence in the beginning of the episode and his intervention at the later stage? It must be this—

From the moment of the departure of Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana to forest till the king's leaving his body (death), Ayodhya was enveloped by darkness caused by the sorrow of the citizens. After the king's death, the sorrow of the citizens got transformed to anger. As its consequence, that envelope of darkness turned REDDISH. It became a reddened envelope. There began to appear symptoms potent with the quality of plugging the kingdom in blood-shed. At that stage, except the Muni, none else was capable of setting that highly explosive situation aright. Hence the Muni intervened, kept the kingdom safe and directed the very minister to send messengers to Bharatha to come as quickly as possible as wanted by the Muni. This action of the Muni also is quite in agreement with all the facts stated earlier.

Now let us look into the open question of Bharatha to the messengers, "was there any calamity in Ayodhya? In case there is any, is my mother the cause for it?" This makes it clear that Bharatha was staying with his grandfather only to be away from his mother, and that he was being constantly induced by his mother to claim his right to be king of Ayodhya; and, also, that his object was only to serve Rama; and, further, that the rivalry was long-standing, instead of a sudden flare-up as taken to be generally. Leaders, chiefs and the like people will not go as such messengers. Those messengers must have been only persons who can move about quickly. They must have been ordinary persons. They are not persons of the type who can be expected to know palace secrets. Yet, Bharatha had put those questions to them. Why? BECAUSE, THE RIVALRY WAS NOT A SECRET, BUT AN OPEN ONE.

10. Bharatha's expectation.

On entering the city, at the close of the journey, Bharatha said, "I expected to see the decorations connected with my brother Rama's coronation. But, I see nothing of the kind. What is it all?" This alone is sufficient to convince every one, that Bharatha, of his own accord, decided to go away from Ayodhya and stay with his grand-father for some time; that this decision was approved by the king and the Muni; and, further, that on the same occasion, the three together decided to crown Rama in his (Bharatha's) absence. This is quite in conformity with the king's proposal to Rama, soon after coming from the assembly hall, where the proclamation to crown Rama was made. The king said, "Rama! my son! I know Bharatha loves and treats you as himself. Still bad influences are very powerful. I had certain bad omens. Therefore, I want to perform your coronation tomorrow itself. Prepare yourself for the same." Thus, Bharatha was the author of the plan to crown Rama in that way, when his mother's compulsion to claim his right to the throne, became unbearable to him.

11. "I have secured the kingdom for you"

Bharatha entered the palace. His mother, on seeing him said, "I HAVE PROCURED THE KINGDOM FOR YOU. HAVE IT". The queen did not say that the king gave you the kingdom, but said, "I have procured it for you." That means, "Now the kingdom is mine, it is for you that I have procured it; and so, have it." This is fact. But, at the the same time, this very fact gives the further clue to the effect that the king did not order Rama to go to forest, but, the queen did so; and, also, it firmly establishes the king's innocence in the episode.

12. As instructed by Vasishta Maha Muni, the elders, chiefs and citizens of Ayodhya assembled in the palace. Word was sent for Bharatha to come. Bharatha arrived. The Maha Muni called Bharatha and said, "Bharatha! your father, the King, gave you the kingdom. Accept the throne without further delay. All articles required for your coronation are ready, and all are waiting to perform it. The kingdom without king cannot keep

its peace.” Whereon Bharatha said, “O! great Muni, I cannot understand as to how the kingdom can remain peaceful by crowning me as king? I am considered by each and every one in the kingdom as one, with whose connivance my mother plotted against my great spotless brother Rama and brought about such indescribable calamity to the whole kingdom. I am despised by one and all in the kingdom; when such a one sat on the throne, can you expect peace in the kingdom? None in the whole world, except my brother Rama, believes me as innocent. Such being the situation, how do you propose to crown me? My wish is that I must, at this moment, proceed to the forest, crown Rama there itself and bring him back to Ayodhya. This I have decided”. On hearing this decision of Bharatha, the sages, ministers, elders, citizens and all became overjoyous. Suspicion of all in the assembly regarding Bharatha, disappeared. Almost the whole of Ayodhya, including the queen Mothers, decided to follow Bharatha to the forest to bring back Rama to the kingdom. The intention of Bharatha being to crown Rama in the forest itself, there followed a complete army and all the articles required for the purpose along with the party. Now, let us see the facts relating to this incident—

The Muni who did not interfere, even while Rama was proceeding to forest, now decided to interfere. Being aware of the prevalence of suspicion in the kingdom regarding Bharatha, the Muni wanted to establish openly, Bharatha’s innocence in his mother’s plot against Rama. Hence the Muni got the citizens and others assembled, and, in their presence, made Bharatha speak. In this way, the Muni got minimised the possible immenseness of further calamity in the form of blood-shed overtaking the kingdom.

13. The great sage-king Janaka, having come to know the situation in Ayodhya and Rama’s departure from there, spies from Mithila came to Ayodhya on mission to collect information regarding Bharatha’s attitude. Soon after Bharatha and party went to the forest, the spies went back to Mithila and reported to the king about all that happened in Ayodhya. They said, “Bharatha’s sincerity is unimaginable. He is the embodiment of affection for Rama. He went to the forest to

bring Rama back. But there is one thing which we are unable to understand—that is, he took a complete army along with him to the forest.”

The king (Janaka) being already suspicious of Bharatha, the last part of the report made that suspicion intense. Why should such a great sage-king suspect Bharatha as Lakshmana did, despite his close relationship with Bharatha like the rest of his brothers? It must have been only due to the rivalry for the throne of Ayodhya. This too indicates that the rivalry was not a secret and sudden flare-up, but an open and long-standing one.

14. At last, the great king Janaka also, with a complete (all the four limbs) army, proceeded to the forest where Rama was put up, to meet any emergency. Both the parties—the one of Bharatha, and the other of Janaka—met at a distance from Chitrakoota where Rama was staying. On meeting Bharatha, king Janaka was convinced that Bharatha was blameless. The parties together proceeded to Chitrakoota. Lakshmana's suspicion of Bharatha was still persistent. He saw Bharatha moving towards Chitrakoota with a huge army. He told Rama, “Brother, Bharatha is not satisfied with the kingdom. See, he is coming to us here too. I am going to kill him before he reaches us. Permit me.” Now also, Rama pacified him as at the palace just before their departure to forest. Both the parties together reached Chitrakoota. All met Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana.

15. The Chitrakoota Assembly.

At a place away from Rama's hermitage, all assembled. Rama was in the hermitage. In this assembly, Vasista Maha Muni made another proposal. The Muni said, “Bharatha should stay in the forest, in place of Rama, for the whole period and let Rama come back to Ayodhya. That way we can overcome the present predicament.” Bharatha at once prepared for it with joy. Now, let us consider the facts regarding this proposal. Why did the Muni make such a curious proposal? Though curious, there must have been proper and strong reasons for the Muni in proposing so. What are those reasons?

The Muni wanted to clear off the slightest lingering suspicion, in case there was any, in the citizens of Ayodhya regarding Bharatha's sincerity. This is a minor one. The other is to impress on the citizens of Mithila and on king Janaka, too, the innocence of Bharatha of his mother's plot against Rama. This is the major reason. The Muni was intent on keeping in tact the prevailing peace in the kingdom, throughout the expected period of 14 years, in the absence of Rama. Hence the Muni made such a proposal in the presence of king Janaka and his people, in addition to the people of Ayodhya, in spite of knowing fully well the inexorableness of Rama's resolve not to return to Ayodhya.

At last, when all attempts failed to get Rama's resolve changed, Bharatha prayed for Rama's wooden-sandals and with them returned to Ayodhya.

16. Rama's request to king Janaka.

Just when all were about to leave Chitrakoota, Rama called aside King Janaka and requested him to go, along with Bharatha, to Ayodhya first, and to look into the affairs of administration, army and treasury and then to proceed to Mithila. Thus Rama gave sage-king Janaka overall charge of Ayodhya. All the facts stated till now show, very clearly, the intention of Rama in charging Janaka with the responsibility for the welfare of Ayodhya. That intention was to keep the unity between Ayodhya, Mithila and the king Kekaya (Kaikeyi's father) in tact. This too was in consonance with the rest of the facts related to the episodes. All these are more than enough for any one to understand well about the great king Dasaratha's innocence in all these.

17. Parnasala.

While going to capture the deer, Rama told Lakshmana to take all precautions to protect Seetha and not to leave the place till he returns. Slowly the deer moved a considerable distance away. Rama followed it. When he failed to catch it alive, Rama shot it. On getting hit, the deer uttered "Seetha! Lakshmana!" and died. On hearing its utterance, Seetha

thought that some harm befell Rama. So, Seetha asked Lakshmana to go to Rama's help. Whereon, Lakshmana said, "No harm will befall Rama; hence I need not go". At this Seetha said, "You (Lakshmana) are following us with some bad motive" and uttered very harsh words, and, further said, "in case you do not go to help Rama, I will jump into fire". In reply, Lakshmana too uttered slightly harsh words. At last, Lakshmana said, "Alright! I am going to my brother; but I think when we return we will not see you here again". Saying this, Lakshmana left Seetha and went to Rama. When Seetha was alone in the hermitage, Ravana carried away Seetha. This is what the history shows. On this ground there is a lot of criticism, by people against Seetha. Now, let us deeply consider the facts relating to these narratives.

Rama said to Lakshmana, "take all precautions to protect Seetha, and, don't leave the place till my return". Yet, it is said that Lakshmana left the place. How could it be? Are there any incidents told anywhere in the history—under any circumstances, on any occasion—that Lakshmana disobeyed Rama? No. Then, how could there be such disobedience, on the part of Lakshmana, only on this particular occasion? THIS IS ABSOLUTELY IMPROBABLE. Then, can it be that by hearing the utterance of the dying deer, Lakshmana too mistook it as that of Rama and felt that Rama was in danger and went to the assistance of Rama leaving Seetha alone? No, it cannot be so, for Lakshmana knew fully well that no harm will befall Rama. Then, can it be that because of the harsh words of Seetha, he left the place and went to Rama? No, this also cannot be. Because, it is said as told by himself, that "we will not see you here again when we return." Knowing this fully well, he would never have left Seetha alone. The last word of Seetha, as told in history, was, "I will jump into fire in case you do not go to the assistance of Rama". Can it be due to this resolve of Seetha that Lakshmana left the place and went to Rama?

How can he do so—or will he do so—despite his knowing that Seetha can no longer be seen when left alone? No, this

too was improbable. This was a peculiarly unbearable situation for Lakshmana. Leaving Seetha alone is disobedience to Rama. Staying there and protecting Seetha was impossible, because of Seetha's resolve to jump into fire in case he did not go to the assistance of Rama. Rama commanded him to protect Seetha from the hands of Rakshasas. Now, he was to protect Seetha not only from the hands of Rakshasas, but also from Seetha's resolve. In the situation, Lakshmana would have adopted the following course in order to enable him to continue to be obedient to Rama by way of protecting Seetha. Lakshmana would have left the hermitage and stayed somewhere nearby, without being seen by Seetha, in order to prevent Seetha from falling into fire, as well as to give her protection from the hands of Rakshasas. In case it is taken that Lakshmana too, might have thought of this procedure, but, he, being alone might not have done so from fear of Rakshasas, and hence went to Rama—then we will be thoroughly wrong, because, the history does not show anywhere under any circumstances about Lakshmana getting afraid of anything or anyone. But, somehow, this did not take place. All the facts discussed relating to Parnasala incident show that this incident did not take place as shown in the history. Then how did it happen?

Both Rama and Lakshmana must have left the hermitage in the usual course for hunting. In their absence, Ravana must have carried away Seetha. In support of this, see what happened on their return to the hermitage.

On coming back to hermitage they did not see Seetha there. Rama began to lament. At that stage, Lakshmana said, "Brother, do not worry for Seetha. Often Seetha used to play hide and seek. As usual, now also, Seetha must be hiding somewhere in the bush. Come, let us search here and there". See how clear it is. Had it been otherwise, as told in the history, Lakshmana would not have said so. History shows that Lakshmana left Seetha in disgust. While leaving Seetha he said "we will not see you here again, when we return". In case this was a fact, Lakshmana would not have reminded Rama of Seetha's habit of playing hide and seek and said, "Do not worry, brother,

let us search for Seetha in this and that bush", instead of saying "What I expected had happened". But he did not say so. These are the facts abiding in the scripture.

In conclusion, the entire episode was the result of long standing and open palace intrigue; the great king Dasaratha did not order Rama's banishment, but queen Kaikeyi did it. Rama went in exilement in order to avoid a possible blood-shed in the kingdom, but not on the queen's orders. Seetha did not utter harsh words to Lakshmana and hence there was no occasion for Lakshmana also to utter harsh words to Seetha. Vasista Maha Muni handled the highly explosive situation most wonderfully. And the sage-king Janaka was in overall charge of the kingdom of Ayodhya throughout the period of Rama's self-imposed exilement. Hence, except queen Kaikeyi, there is not even a pin-point of ground for finding fault in any others related to this episode.

Very many say that all these facts are not found in the Valmeeki Ramayana, but only some among them. But, the rest are there in Tulasi Ramayana. Further, in both, there are very many expressions, in support of these facts, which are not mentioned here.

A great many people consider Valmeeki Ramayana as the only authentic scripture but not Tulasi Ramayana. But, it requires reconsideration. The great Muni Valmeeki perceived through Divyadrishiti, and wrote the Ramayana beforehand—that is, a long time before the happenings. And the great Bhakta, Tulasi Das, wrote Ramayana a long time after the happenings. So, Tulasi Das had the advantage of going through the Valmeeki Ramayana in addition to his own perception. The Muni perceived and wrote about what was going to happen and the Bhakta perceived and wrote about what had already happened; hence, both must be considered as authentic.

had happened

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